Ohio | Department of Education

Student Learning Objective Information

1. What is a Student Learning Objective?

A Student Learning Objective (SLO) is a measurable, long-term academic growth target that a teacher sets at the beginning of the year for all students or for subgroups of students. SLOs demonstrate a teacher's impact on student learning within a given interval of instruction based upon baseline data gathered at the beginning of the course. Each SLO includes:

- The student population or sample included in the objective;
- The standards the SLO will align with;
- The assessments that will be used to measure student progress;
- The period of time covered by the SLO;
- The expected student growth; and
- The rationale for the expected student growth.

2. What does a high-quality SLO look like?

High-quality SLOs state clearly which students are included in the learning objective, how growth will be measured over what time period, and why that level of growth should be expected of those students. High-quality SLOs include the following:

- ✓ ***The student population or student subgroup included in the objective****.* Every student should be covered by at least one SLO to ensure that no group of students is overlooked.
- ✓ ***The standards the SLO addresses.*** SLOs should link to specific national or state standard for the grade or content area.
- ✓ ***The assessment(s) used.*** The SLO should include assessments both to track student progress and make midcourse corrections (formative), and to indicate if the objective was met (summative).
- ✓ ***The period of time covered by the SLO.*** The SLO should note the period of instruction used to meet the goal (i.e., quarter, semester or an entire year); this period of instruction should be the length of the course. Depending on the length of the instruction period, teachers also should include timeframes for mid-year assessments of progress so that they can adjust instruction or, in some cases, modify SLOs as needed.
- ✓ ***The expected student growth within that period.*** The target for student growth should be realistic yet challenging. It also should include how growth will be measured.
- ✓ ***The rationale for the expected student growth.*** High-quality SLOs include strong justifications for why the goal is important and achievable for this group of students. Rationales should draw upon assessment data, student outcomes, and curriculum standards.

High-quality SLOs specify measurable goals that are ambitious, yet attainable. SLOs should be broad enough to represent the most important learning or overarching skills, but narrow enough

to measure. When possible, SLOs should align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). If the CCSS do not apply to a teacher's academic area, SLOs should align with the Ohio Academic Content Standards (OACS). If the OACS do not apply to the subject area, teachers should use applicable national standards put forth by educational organizations.

3. What are the benefits of using SLOs?

The SLO process reinforces best teaching practices and encourages educators to ensure that their students will be college- and career-ready. Teachers using best practices already follow an informal SLO process: They set goals for their students, use data to assess student progress and adjust their instruction based upon that progress. Thus, the SLO process provides teachers with ways to formalize their teaching practice, give input on how student learning will be measured and how they will be evaluated.

Unlike some other measures of teacher effectiveness, all school personnel can set SLOs because the ability to create SLOs does not depend upon the availability of standardized assessment scores. The SLO process allows all educators to focus on the specific objectives they want to achieve with their students and measure student growth using measures that are most relevant for their student population and content areas. SLOs enable ***all*** educators to demonstrate their impact on student learning and receive recognition for their efforts.

4. **What will the SLO process look like?**

LEAs have some flexibility to shape the process to fit local contexts, but ODE recommends the following steps:

1. Review baseline data;
2. Create SLOs;
3. Obtain SLO approval, per local process;
4. Monitor progress toward attainment of SLO growth targets;
5. Revise SLOs, if necessary;
6. Review evidence and evaluate progress towards and attainment of SLO growth targets.